REMARKS

Claims 1-14, 17, 20, 23, and 24 are all the claims presently pending in the application.

Applicant hereby affirms the provisional election of claims 1-14, 17, and 20, for prosecution on the

merits first. Claims 1, 14, 17, and 20 have been amended to more particularly define the features of

the present invention. Non-elected claims 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, and 22 are canceled without prejudice

or disclaimer. Claims 23 and 24 have been added to claim additional features of the invention.

It is noted that the claim amendments are made only for more particularly pointing out the

invention, and not for distinguishing the invention over the prior art, narrowing the claims or for any

statutory requirements of patentability.

Further, Applicants specifically state that no amendment to any claim herein should be

construed as a disclaimer of any interest in or right to an equivalent of any element or feature of the

amended claim.

Claims 1-14, 17, and 20 stand rejected on prior art grounds. Claims 14, 17, and 20 stand

rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Schwab (U.S. Patent No. 5,973,731;

hereinafter "Schwab '731"). Claims 1-6, 9, 10, and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as

being unpatentable over Manolis, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,583,799; hereinafter "Manolis") in view

of Schwab '731. Claims 11 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable

over Manolis in view of Schwab '731 and further in view of Schwab (U.S. Patent No. 6,226,412,

hereinafter "Schwab '412"). Claims 7 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being

unpatentable over Manolis in view of Schwab '731, and further in view of Hashimoto, et al. (U.S.

Patent No. 2002/0012453; hereinafter "Hashimoto").

These rejections are respectfully traversed in the following discussion.

I.   THE CLAIMED INVENTION

An illustrative, non-limiting embodiment of the present invention is directed to an image data

communication system in which a plurality of client computers and a server system are capable of

communicating with each other via a network. In the exemplary embodiment, one of the client

computers includes an original-image data specifying unit for specifying original-image data that is

to be transmitted to the server system and an original-image data transmitting unit for transmitting

the original-image data, which has been specified by the original-image data specifying unit, to the

server system.

The server system includes an original-image data receiving unit for receiving the original-

image data transmitted from the original-image data transmitting unit, an image data generating unit,

which responds to receipt of the original-image data by the original-image data receiving unit, for

generating reduced-data-quantity image data of same format of two stages representing at least two

images possessing data quantities of at least two stages in each of which the quantity of data is less

than that of the original-image data, and a unit for associating the original-image data, which has

been received by the original-image data receiving unit, and the reduced-data-quantity image data

that has been generated by the image data generating unit.

In another exemplary embodiment, a server system capable of communicating with a client computer via a network includes an original-image data receiving unit for receiving the original-image data transmitted, an image data generating unit, which responds to receipt of the original-image data by the original-image data receiving unit, for generating reduced-data-quantity image data of same format of two stages representing at least two images possessing data quantities of at least two stages in each of which the quantity of data is less than that of the original-image data, and a unit for associating the original-image data, which has been received by the original-image data receiving unit, and the reduced-data-quantity image data that has been generated by the image data generating unit.

In another exemplary embodiment, a method of controlling the operation of a server system capable of communicating with a client computer via a network includes the steps of receiving original-image data that is sent, generating, in response to receipt of the original-image data, reduced-data-quantity image data of same format of two stages representing at least two images possessing data quantities of at least two stages in each of which the quantity of data is less than that of the original-image data, and associating the original-image data that has been received and the reduced-data-quantity image data that has been generated.

Another exemplary embodiment of the present invention relates to a recording medium storing a program for controlling a server system capable of communicating with a client computer via a network. The program controls a computer of the server system so as to receive original-image data that has been sent, generate, in response to receipt of the original-image data, reduced-data-quantity image data of same format of two stages representing at least two images possessing data

quantities of at least two stages in each of which the quantity of data is less than that of the original-image data, and associate the original-image data that has been received and the reduced-data-quantity image data that has been generated.

The claimed invention can upload image data possessing a plurality of image qualities to a server system and register image data and search information for searching the image data in an image database in a comparatively simple manner, such that a plurality of client computers and a server system are capable of communicating with each other via a network.

II.   CLAIM REJECTIONS BASED ON PRIOR ART GROUNDS

A.   Claims 14, 17, and 20:

Claims 14, 17, and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Schwab '731. For at least the following reasons, Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

In the present invention, the original-image data is transmitted from the client computer of the server system. The original-image data is received by the server system, whereupon an image data generating unit of the server system generates "reduced-data-quantity image data of same format of two stages representing at least two images possessing data quantities of at least two stages in each of which the quantity of data is less than that of the original-image data", as recited in claim 14 (emphasis added).

That is, the server system may obtain original-image data representing an original image, medium-image data the quantity of data of which is less than that of the original-image data, and thumbnail-image data the quantity of data of which is less than that of the medium-image data.

However, in the claimed invention, the medium-image data and thumbnail-image data are the <u>same</u>

<u>format</u>. For example, both the medium-image data and the thumbnail image data can have the same

JPEG format. (See, e.g., page 35, line 13, to page 36, line 15, of the specification.)

In comparison, the secure identification system of Schwab has a client PC 60 and a central

database computer 80. The <u>T-format</u> image files are transmitted from the client PC 60 to the central

database computer 80, and the <u>T-format</u> image files are converted to the <u>R-format</u> image files at the

central database computer 80.

However, Schwab neither discloses nor suggests the novel and unobvious combination of

elements including an image data unit for generating reduced-data quantity image data <u>of same</u>

<u>format</u> of two stages representing at least two images possessing data quantities of at least two stages

in each of which the quantity of data is less than that of the original-image data, as recited in claim

14.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Schwab neither discloses nor suggests all of the recitations

of claim 14, and therefore, claim 14 is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious by Schwab.

With respect to claims 17 and 20, Applicants submit that claims 17 and 20 also are patentable

over Schwab at least for reasons that are analogous to the reasons set forth with respect to claim 14

above.

B.   Obviousness Rejections

The Office Action rejects claims 1-6, 9, 10, and 13 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being

unpatentable over Manolis in view of Schwab '731, claims 11 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as

being unpatentable over Manolis in view of Schwab '731 and further in view of Schwab '412, and

claims 7 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Manolis in view of Schwab '731

in view of Hashimoto. For at least the following reasons, Applicants traverse these rejections.

It is noted that the filing date of the Malonis reference is **November 29, 1999**, which is **after**

the application's foreign priority dates of **January 14, 1999** and **March 24, 1999**, based on JP

Application Nos. 11-079569 and JP 11-008097, respectively. Therefore, the Malonis reference can

be removed as prior art by filing a verified or certified English language translation of each of the

Japanese priority documents for the present application, thereby perfecting Applicants' claim to

foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. §119(a)-(d).

However, in this case, it is not necessary at this time to perfect the claim to foreign priority

and remove the Malonis reference because the secondary reference, Schwab '731, does not disclose

or suggest the claimed image data generating unit, as recited in claim 1, for which the Schwab

reference is relied upon.

That is, the Office Action acknowledges that Malonis does not disclose the claimed "image

data generating unit", and therefore, relies on Schwab '731 to make up for the deficiencies of

Malonis. However, as set forth above, Schwab neither discloses nor suggests at least "an image data

generating unit... for generating reduced-data-quantity image data of same format of two stages

representing at least two images possessing data quantities of at least two stages in each of which the

quantity of data is less than that of the original-image data", as recited in claim 1 (emphasis added).

Thus, for at least the foregoing reasons, claims 1-13 would not have been obvious over any combination of Manolis, Schwab '731, and Hashimoto, and accordingly, each of the rejections under § 103 should be withdrawn.

Applicants reserve the right to perfect the claim to foreign priority and remove the Malonis reference as prior art.

III.   NEW CLAIMS

New claims 23 and 24 are added to recite the features of the claimed invention in means-plus-function claim language. Applicants submit that claims 23 and 24 are patentable for at least reasons that are analogous to the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claims 1, 14, 17, and 20.

IV.   FORMAL MATTERS AND CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that claims 1-14, 17, 20, 23, and 24 are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue at the earliest possible time.

Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in fees or to credit any

overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully Submitted,

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